

Message Text

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TAGS: EAGR, EFIN, GW

SUBJECT: FRG RELIEF MEASURES FOR DROUGHT-STRICKEN
AREAS

1. ACCORDING TO RECENT PRESS REPORTS, THE FRG DEFENSE MINISTRY HAS DETAILED AT LEAST 4,000 TROOPS TO DROUGHT-RELIEF PROJECTS. THESE SOLDIERS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR ASSISTANCE ON PROJECTS DESIGNATED BY EMERGENCY RELIEF AUTHORITIES, WITH COSTS BEING FINANCED FROM THE FEDERAL BUDGET. PROJECTS ALREADY UNDERTAKEN INCLUDE CONSTRUCTION OF WATER SUPPLY PIPE LINES AND TRANSPORT OF HAY FROM HARVESTED FIELDS.

2. OTHER FORMS OF RELIEF FOR DROUGHT-STRICKEN FARMERS MAY ALSO BE IMPLEMENTED. FRG FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL MINISTRY AND FINANCE MINISTRY HAVE BOTH RELEASED PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS DENYING LACK OF INTEREST IN PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS AFFECTED BY THE DROUGHT. FOOD
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AND AGRICULTURAL MINISTRY POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO MEASURE EXTENT OF CROP DAMAGE,

AND MOREOVER THAT THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO ASSUME ENTREPRENEURIAL RISKS COMPLETELY. THE GOVERNMENT CAN, NEVERTHELESS, INTERVENE IN SITUATIONS WHERE THE FUTURE LIVELIHOOD OF AFFECTED FARMERS IS THREATENED. THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL MINISTRY HAS FORMED A WORKING GROUP TO DETERMINE THE AMOUNT OF DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE DROUGHT AND TO REVIEW POSSIBLE MEASURES OF ASSISTANCE. ACCORDING TO THE AGMIN ANNOUNCEMENT, ASSISTANCE IS MOST URGENTLY REQUIRED IN THE MEAT SECTOR IN ORDER TO AVOID A COMPLETE BREAKDOWN OF THE MARKET. PURCHASE AND STOCKPILING OF SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS. ADDITIONAL BEEF IS IN PARTICULAR BEING CONSIDERED IN ORDER TO AVOID A SHARP DECLINE IN PRODUCER PRICES. ALSO UNDER CONSIDERATION ARE SUBSIDIES FOR TRANSPORT COSTS OF SHIPPING ROUGHAGE AND STRAW INTO DROUGHT-STRICKEN AREAS.

3. THE FINANCE MINISTRY STATEMENT ADDRESSED ITSELF TO PROPOSALS FOR TAX RELIEF THROUGH THE POSTPONEMENT OF TAX PAYMENTS. IN ITS STATEMENT, THE FINANCE MINISTRY EXPLAINED THAT TAX RELIEF PROGRAMS TO AID VICTIMS OF NATURAL DISASTERS CAN ONLY BE INITIATED UPON REQUEST OF FINANCIAL AUTHORITIES IN STATEMENT GOVERNMENTS, AND THAT NO SUCH REQUESTS HAD YET BEEN RECEIVED. WHILE DENYING EARLIER ALLEGATIONS THAT FINMIN APEL WAS OPPOSED TO TAX RELIEF, THE FINANCE MINISTRY GAVE NO INDICATION OF WHAT ITS ATTITUDE MIGHT BE TOWARD SUCH PROPOSALS.

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